

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 14, 2009

COMMITTEES:  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND  
FORESTRY

BANKING, HOUSING AND  
URBAN AFFAIRS

COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND  
TRANSPORTATION

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
United States Department of Agriculture  
14<sup>th</sup> and Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I am concerned after reviewing the submitted testimony of William Hohenstein, Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Global Change Program Office, for today's hearing of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. Mr. Hohenstein indicated that "the agriculture sector will face higher energy and input costs" as a result of cap-and-trade legislation. At the same time, he also indicated that "USDA believes the opportunities from climate legislation will likely outweigh the costs."

Taken together, these claims suggest that USDA has conducted analyses of increases in farm input costs and weighed them against measured opportunities. If so, why has USDA not shared this analysis, despite having testified before the Senate twice in the last ten days.

It is my understanding that you or another USDA representative will testify at the Senate Agriculture Committee's upcoming hearing, "The Role of Agriculture and Forestry in Global Warming Legislation," to be held July 22, 2009. I trust you or your representative will provide more specific written information prior to next week's hearing. I know that USDA has an outstanding team of economists with expertise in such analysis and I am eager to see the data.

I trust you agree that any analysis of cost impact in the agriculture sector should contain the following information:

- a state-by-state analysis of the cost of cap-and-trade on agricultural industries;
- a crop-specific analysis of the impact of the legislation on farmers engaged in the production of corn, soybeans, dry beans, wheat, cotton, sugar, fruits and vegetables;
- an analysis of how the legislation will affect farmers and ranchers who produce cattle, dairy, pork, sheep, chicken, and turkey;
- and finally, your assessment of how many acres will be taken out of production as a result of this bill, and what impact that will have on the availability and cost of food, fiber, feed, biofuels, and other agri-products.

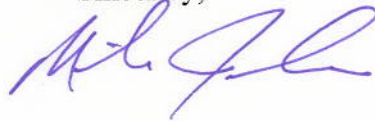
Cap-and-trade will not affect states, crops, or regions equally. A one-size-fits-all analysis simply will not give us a true picture of this legislation's impact. It will have a different impact on a corn farmer in Nebraska than it will have on a chicken farmer in Arkansas, just as it will

impact the dairy farmer in upstate New York differently than it will the orange grower in California. A singular, nationalized assessment of the bill's consequences will not be sufficient.

We have a responsibility to seek a full understanding of this legislation's effect on our nation's farmers and related agricultural industries. The information I am requesting is critical to helping the Senate and America's producers develop a clearer picture of how much costs are going to increase for farmers and ranchers, which parts of the country will be most severely impacted, and which industries within agriculture will incur the greatest losses as a result of this bill.

I look forward to hearing your testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "M. J. L.", written in a cursive style.

Cc: Members of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee